

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system, comprising:
 - a light source providing a light beam;
 - a scanner imparting scanning deflection to the light beam to provide a scanning beam approaching a spot on a substrate surface at a first angle; and
 - a deflection element selectively insertable into an optical path of the scanning beam and deflecting the scanning beam so as to cause the scanning beam to approach the one of said spot and substantially said spot on said substrate surface at a second angle.
2. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 1, wherein the first angle is normal to said surface of said substrate.
3. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 2, wherein the second angle is oblique to said surface of said substrate.
4. (Original) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 3, wherein the scanner comprises one of a scanning mirror, a rotating mirror, a polygonal mirror, and an acousto-optic deflector.
5. (Original) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 4, wherein the deflection element comprises a mirror connected to an actuator arm.

6. (Original) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 4, wherein the deflection element comprises a plurality of movable mirrors.

7. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 6, wherein the movable mirrors are disposed to direct the scanning beam at the second angle to a focal position substantially corresponding to a focal position of the scanning beam approaching the said surface of said substrate at the first angle.

8. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 4,

wherein the deflection element comprises a glass optical element including a first mirrored surface on a first side and a second mirror surface on a second side,

wherein the scanning beam enters a third side and is reflected from the first mirrored surface and second mirrored surface obliquely toward the said surface of said substrate at the second angle.

9. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 8,

wherein a focal position of an oblique beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the second angle when the deflection element is in the optical path coincides with a focal position of a normal beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the first angle when the deflection element is not in the optical path.

10. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 8,

wherein the first mirrored surface is a partially mirrored surface transmitting a portion of incident light and reflecting a portion of incident light, and wherein a second glass optical element is disposed adjacent the first mirrored surface to focus light transmitted through the first mirrored surface onto the same coordinate of the said surface of said substrate illuminated by the scanning beam reflected by the second mirrored surface toward the said surface of said substrate at the second angle.

11. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 10,

wherein a focal position of an oblique beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the second angle when the deflection element is in the optical path coincides with a focal position of a normal beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the first angle when the deflection element is not in the optical path.

12. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 4,

wherein the deflection element comprises a first optical element, a second optical element, and a third optical element,

wherein one side of the second optical element is adjacent the first optical element and another side of the second optical element is adjacent the third optical element,

wherein light incident to the deflection element includes both s- and p- polarizations in proportions selectable by use of at least one of a quarter-wave plate and a half-wave plate;

wherein a s-polarizing beamsplitting element is provided between the first optical element and the second optical element,

wherein a p-polarizing beamsplitting element is provided between the second optical element and the third optical element, and

wherein the scanning beam incident on the second optical element is output obliquely toward the substrate as s-polarized light and p-polarized light from the first optical element and the second optical element, respectively, and

wherein the foci of the two oblique output beams coincide on the said surface of said substrate.

13. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 12,

wherein a focal position of an oblique beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the second angle when the deflection element is in the optical path coincides with a focal position of a normal beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the first angle when the deflection element is not in the optical path.

14. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system for inspecting a substrate, comprising:

a light source providing a light beam;

a scanning element adapted to output the light beam along a first optical path to the a spot on surface of said substrate, the first optical path including a portion incident to the said spot on said surface of said substrate and forming a first angle relative to the said surface of said substrate; and

a deflection element selectively introduced into the first optical path to output the light beam along a second optical path to the one of said spot and substantially said spot on said surface of said substrate, the second optical path including a portion incident to the said one of said spot and substantially said spot on said surface of said substrate and forming a second angle relative to the said surface of said substrate,

wherein the first angle is different from the second angle.

15. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system for inspecting a substrate according to claim 14, wherein the first angle is oblique to the said surface of said substrate and the second angle is substantially perpendicular to the said surface of said substrate.

16. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system for inspecting a substrate according to claim 14, wherein the second angle is oblique to the substrate and the first angle is substantially perpendicular to the said surface of said substrate.

17. (Original) A variable illumination angle inspection system for inspecting a substrate according to claim 14, wherein the deflection element is selectively inserted into the first optical path by an actuator.

18. (Original) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 14, wherein the scanning element comprises one of a scanning mirror, a rotating mirror, a polygonal mirror and an acousto-optic deflector.

19. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 17,

wherein the deflection element comprises a glass optical element including a first mirrored surface on a first side and a second mirror surface on a second side,

wherein the scanning light beam enters a third side and is reflected from the first mirrored surface and second mirrored surface obliquely toward the said surface of said substrate at the second angle.

20. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 19,

wherein a focal position of an oblique beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the second angle when the deflection element is in the first optical path coincides with a focal position of a normal beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the first angle when the deflection element is not in the first optical path.

21. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 19,

wherein the first mirrored surface is a partially mirrored surface transmitting a portion of incident light and reflecting a portion of incident light,

wherein a second glass optical element is movably disposed adjacent the first mirrored surface to focus light transmitted through the partially mirrored surface onto the same coordinate of the said surface of said substrate illuminated by the scanning beam reflected by the second mirrored surface toward the said surface of said substrate at the second angle.

22. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 21,

wherein a focal position of an oblique beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the second angle when the deflection element is in the first optical path coincides with a focal position of a normal beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the first angle when the deflection element is not in the first optical path.

23. (Original) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 16,

wherein the deflection element comprises a first optical element, a second optical element, and a third optical element,

wherein one side of the second optical element is adjacent the first optical element and another side of the second optical element is adjacent the third optical element,

wherein a s-polarizing beamsplitting element is provided between the first optical element and the second optical element,

wherein a p-polarizing beamsplitting element is provided between the second optical element and the third optical element, and

wherein the scanning beam incident on the second optical element is output obliquely toward the substrate as s-polarized light and p-polarized light from the first optical element and the second optical element, respectively.

24. (Currently Amended) A variable illumination angle inspection system according to claim 23,

wherein a focal position of an oblique beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the second angle when the deflection element is in the first optical path coincides with a focal position of a normal beam approaching the said surface of said substrate from the first angle when the deflection element is not in the first optical path.

25. (Original) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system, comprising:

a first deflecting surface;

a second deflecting surface;

wherein each of said first deflecting surface and said second deflecting surface include a mirrored surface,

wherein said first deflecting surface is disposed at an angle with respect to said second deflecting surface,

wherein an illumination beam entering the deflection element from a first direction is output from the deflection element in a second direction.

26. (Currently Amended) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 25, wherein the first direction is normal to a surface of a substrate to be inspected, and wherein the second direction is oblique to said surface of a substrate to be inspected.

27. (Currently Amended) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 25, wherein the first direction is oblique to said surface of a substrate to be inspected, and wherein the second direction is normal to said surface of a substrate to be inspected.

28. (Original) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 26, wherein a focal position of an oblique illumination beam output from the deflection element coincides with a focal position of the incident illumination beam entering the deflection element.

29. (Original) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 26, further comprising:

an optical element disposed adjacent the partially mirrored surface having a focal point coinciding with a focal point of an oblique illumination beam output from the deflection element in the second direction.

30. (Original) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 26, further comprising:

 a third deflecting surface;

 a fourth deflecting surface;

 a s-polarizing beamsplitting element provided in a primary optical path including the first deflecting surface and the second deflecting surface;

 a p-polarizing beamsplitting element provided in a secondary optical path including the third deflecting surface and the fourth deflecting surface;

 wherein each of said third deflecting surface and said fourth deflecting surface include a mirrored surface,

 wherein said third deflecting surface is disposed at an angle with respect to said fourth deflecting surface,

 wherein a scanning beam incident to the deflection element from the first direction normal to the substrate is output to at least one of the primary and second optical paths; and

 wherein a portion of the scanning beam output from the first optical path is output in a first oblique direction and a portion of the scanning beam output from the second optical path is output in a second oblique direction.

31. (Original) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 30, further comprising:

 a polarizer element to control a polarization of the scanning beam incident to the deflection element,

wherein the scanning beam is controlled to include both s- and p- polarizations.

32. (Original) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 30, wherein a focal position of the first optical path coincides with a focal position of the second optical path.

33. (Original) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 25, wherein the deflection element comprises a prism.

34. (Original) A deflection element for use in a variable illumination angle substrate inspection system according to claim 30, wherein the deflection element comprises a plurality of prisms.